

# Purdue Extension Research Report

Report created by **Team Dos**



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## MEET THE TEAM

**Briana Broadus** is a Indiana-native senior studying public relations at Indiana University. Briana's experience comes from her abroad experience in the Dominican Republic and Australia. After undergrad she plans to attend law school to practice Civil Rights Law and hopes to run political campaigns with her PR background. She is the vice president of National Association of Black Journalist (NABJ) and a member of PRSSA Bateman Competition team.

**Kevin Chrisco** is an Indiana-native and a sophomore studying public relations and journalism at Indiana University. He is excited to work as a freelance journalist this summer for local, Southern-Indiana publications. He aspires to work as a music journalist or working with smaller bands to help grow their image.

**Isabella Gutierrez** is a Michigan-native studying public relations and minoring in political science at Indiana University. Her previous experiences include President of She's the First nonprofit IU chapter and vice president of Marketing for IUs Culture of Care organization. She is also a reporter for the Media School, and as an ambassador and previous alumni advisor for the Media Living Learning community. After graduating and working full-time this summer, she hopes to work for a PR or communications agency in Chicago.

**Alexandra Leix** is an Indiana-native and a sophomore studying public relations at Indiana University with minors in spanish and marketing. She is looking forward to working with Rae Hostetler, owner of Hostetler Public Relations this summer before traveling to Salamanca, Spain for study abroad. In her first internship, Alex will help Rae run two social media accounts for clients by writing content and creating graphics.

**Hannah Mason** is a Chicago-native studying public relations at Indiana University with a minor in Spanish. Hannah's experience comes from her internship at the Glenview Park District as well as her role as PR chair for her sorority, Theta Phi Alpha. Post-graduation, she aspires to grow her career by working for sophisticated companies in downtown Chicago.

**Rachael Morrell** is from Charlotte, North Carolina and studies Public Relations and Marketing at Indiana University. Her experience includes interning at an NYC-based agency, Bollare Communications, as well as Jo Malone London on their PR teams. She also serves as the VP of PR and Marketing for her sorority, Alpha Chi Omega. She is looking forward to this summer where she is going to be interning in Chicago as a marketing intern for InvestmentNews.

**Kate Morrison** is a Chicago-native currently studying public relations at Indiana University with a minor in graphic design. Kate has had first-hand experience in the PR industry during her internships both at Manhattan-based Seventh House PR and Chicago-based Chome City Creative, where she was an integral part in maintaining relationships with brands and producing content client coverage.

**Sara Rutkowski** is an Indiana-native junior studying public relations at Indiana University. Her experience comes from her year-long internship with One Southern Indiana working with their business resource and event planning department as well as being the Executive Assistant to the Director of Stewardship and Alumni Giving at her Hanover College. She is a member of the Public Relations Student Society of American IU chapter. She is also the member of her sorority, Alpha Delta Pi, marketing committee as their apparel chair. She is looking forward to this summer where she will be interning in Michigan at an advertising agency.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our team has conducted research and culminated a report for Purdue Extension in order to help their organization raise awareness as well as revenue towards Orange County agritourism efforts. Purdue Extension has recognized the opportunity for agritourism in Orange County and we believe that creating new agritourism programs as well as marketing existing ones will benefit farmers and tourists alike.

Based on our qualitative and quantitative feedback, our team developed this comprehensive report to map our findings and explain our recommendations based on the information we collected. We began with a situation analysis which analyzed Purdue Extensions internal and external environment to understand their capabilities, target market and SWOT. We conducted several qualitative interviews with farmers and tourism professionals in order to collect various data. We also created a qualtrics survey that was given to tourists to determine how a majority of tourists feel towards this subject. Through this report, our goal is to provide insights and recommendations based off of the data we have collected throughout the semester in order to increase agritourism understanding in Orange County.

## OPENING SUMMARY

We have built this report chronologically. Our client Purdue Extension will be able to experience the report just as our team did in building data. We have detailed our situation analysis first, followed by our qualitative findings and our quantitative findings. We compiled and labeled the recommendations at the end of our report we to make them easily accessible. The report is finished with challenges our team faced and the lessons we learned throughout the course of our research this semester. Our report ends with a list of our appendices and references.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### Internal Environment

#### Orange County- Purdue Extension

The Orange County Purdue Extension office is made up of four employees including Angela Chastain, Jennifer Goldsbury, Stella Lowe and Abigail Heidenreich. Their office serves the 19,426 county population and is located in Paoli, Indiana. Paoli is one of Orange County's four incorporated towns, which includes Paoli, Orleans, French Lick, and West Baden. They are one of 92 offices part of the Purdue Extension program. While technically being employees of Purdue, their focus and work are garnered towards bettering the citizens and future of the Orange County community. They are currently working on integrating the tourism economy and the large agricultural community to create a agritourism market.

#### Mission

"We transform lives and livelihoods through research-based education".

#### Vision

"We will be a leader in providing relevant, high-impact educational programs that transform the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities in Indiana and the world."

#### Objectives and Values for Orange County Purdue Extension

Orange County Purdue Extension four objectives for achieving their vision in Orange County: addressing the Opioid Crisis, revitalizing small towns, introducing aerial/digital methods to rural farming, and encouraging Indiana's future entrepreneurs. They communicated that the objective they wanted us to focus on was revitalizing their four small towns through agritourism research and eventual implementation. Below is a more in-depth objective description taken verbatim from their website.

1. Addressing the Opioid Crisis: The opioid crisis has hit Indiana hard and is a complex problem for communities. Purdue Extension is addressing this issue with community-based prevention education.
2. Revitalizing small towns: Purdue Extension partners with the Hometown Collaboration Initiative, helping small towns capitalize on their potential to flourish.
3. Eyes in the sky: Agriculture's next wave is digital. That means data-driven diagnoses, forecasts, and assessments. Unmanned aerial vehicles are crucial to that toolkit, and Purdue Extension is setting best practices for farmers across Indiana.
4. Encouraging Indiana's future entrepreneurs: Indiana 4-H Youth Development has always grown the next generation of leaders. Today, that also means entrepreneurship. Purdue Extension and the Indiana 4-H Entrepreneurship Academy create opportunities for youth to dream big.

## **Function**

On the Purdue Extension Strategic Plan they list the function of the extensions as “commit[ment] to a county-based Extension model that has delivered, and will continue to deliver, educational programming focused on local needs.” The function of the Orange County Purdue Extension office is to use the research and tools collected from the University and utilize them to cater to the community’s specific needs and issues. Abby’s, our point of contact, main function is to foster relationships with the local farmers and use programming to sustain, as well as elevate, the community.

## **Issue**

The main issue our client has faced in building an agritourism market has been attracting tourists to the towns other than French Lick and West Baden. They face competition from the resort, exotic animal tours, Big Splash Adventure, Patoka Lake, and golf courses. Another issue they have faced is getting the farmers to trust, or be willing, to open up their businesses to outsiders. It has been difficult for the client to build relationships with them as well.. The lack of wifi and cell phone access in the rural areas can be unappealing to tourists.

## **Tackling Issues**

The client has put out advertisements for Farm to Table options for tourists visiting the resorts. At the present time, there has not been a lot of interest. The Orange County Farmers Market has been successful, but it is seasonal. The client has also set up tours down to the Amish Village where the Amish community would bring out their goods to the tourists to buy. However, the business was unreliable and the lack of sustainable business lost the trust of the Amish community. Our point of contact is working on regaining that. The hope is that the data will serve as factual evidence of the benefits agritourism can bring to a community. The client has communicated that our research is essentially a starting point for the agritourism initiative.

## **External Environment**

### **Current agritourism businesses or potential partners**

- **Wilstem**
  - The Wilstem Exotic Zoo is 11 Acres and features animals such as giraffes, elephants, and grizzly bears. It also has activities such as zip-line tours, ATV tours, and horseback riding. It is located in Paoli.
- **Big Splash Adventure**
  - This is a 40,000 square foot water park located in French Lick. They are a sister property of the exotic zoo and have many water rides to attract tourists, namely families with children.
- **Paoli Peaks**
  - This is a ski-resort located in Paoli. They offer snowboarding, skiing, and tubing. This business is mostly seasonal.
- **Lost River**
  - Lost River Market and Deli is a cooperative business that is one of the more progressive, liberal agricultural presences in Orange County. They serve mostly local, organic food to serve the county area and local vendors. They are located in Paoli and are a good example of agricultural businesses in the area.
- **French Lick & West Baden Springs Hotel**



- French Lick Resort and West Baden Springs Hotel brings in a lot of tourism for Orange County. These are a historic sites and the resort features different hotels, award-winning golf-courses, spas, event venues, and a casino. They are an advantage to the area because the business brings in a number of tourists and potential business. However, the client has communicated that one of the biggest struggles has been getting the tourists to venture outside of the French Lick area to Orange County's other tourist opportunities.

### **External Competitors & Opponents**

- **Nashville, Indiana**

- Nashville, Indiana, though located over an hour away from Orange County, is still a very large tourist site for people planning to visit southwest Indiana. With an antique town vibe, Nashville, especially in the autumn months, is a popular agritourism site for many families. Here you'll find lots of fruits and veggies at the outdoor marketplaces, various outdoor activities, and a thriving art community. Further, besides the many fall agriculture events and aspects that build the town, Nashville is also located very close to Brown County State Park, where there are several forests and hiking trails. Being a well-known tourist destination, Nashville could definitely be a competitor in attracting many publics away from Orange County.

- **Fair Oaks Farms**

- Fair Oaks Farms located in Fair Oaks Indiana is one of the further agri-tourism sites from Orange County. However, because of its popularity, it could still be regarded as a big competitor for Orange County tourism efforts. Fair Oaks Farm is known statewide as being one of the top agritourism destinations for both in- state and out-of-state families and visitors. Boasting features like a large creamery and dairy farms, indoor and outdoor playgrounds, restaurants, shops, several farm animal excursions, and orchard and more - Fair Oaks is definitely one of the biggest opponents of any Orange County agri-tourism.

- **Bloomington, Indiana**

- Bloomington, Indiana located about a half hour away from Orange County is one of Orange Counties closer opposing towns. Not only does it promote agri-tourism spots to see, but it also has the student advantage. With Indiana University being home to over 50,000 students, Bloomington always has a very steady flow of tourists visiting from all over the world. Though Bloomington is known mainly for the university, there are still several sites to visit nearby. Downtown, there is a thriving farmers market that brings in Bloomington residents and out-of-towners alike. Additionally, outside of Bloomington, there are several lakes, forests, and bike trails. People are attracted to Lake Griffy and Lake Monroe which allow visitors to kayak, canoe, rent boats for the day and more. Even further, directly outside of Bloomington is a very established winery (Oliver Winery) that many people from all over come to see. Though these Bloomington spots aren't directly tied to the outlying farms, they are still alluring tourist attractions that make for prime competitors to those of Orange County.

### **Supporters**

- **Purdue University**

- Expand on the the research that Purdue University provides both within their educational programs as well as their agricultural research. Further explore advantages or opportunities within the Purdue Agriculture school, one that is ranked as the number 1 agriculture school in the US and 9th ranked in the world. Purdue University may support and provide research for purdue extension agriculture ventures.
- **Local Media**
  - If the local media can be reached, it may extend its support in promoting agriculture ventures. Through examples like press releases or radio spots, Purdue Extension may be able to gain support from the public, after receiving the support and promotion through accessed local media.
- **Indianapolis Economic Development Corporation**
  - The Indianapolis Economic Development corporation (or IEDC) promotes a mission to develop the economy by sustaining Hoosier jobs while also stating that they will work locally and at the state level to grow local companies at home. The IEDC may provide grants or funding, needed to grow large agriculture ventures. The IEDC could be a potential partner in working together with Purdue extension to create or continue agritourism opportunities and ventures.

### **Social Media Presence & Public Sentiments**

Aside from publics posting their share of social media posts at already popular Orange County tourist destinations, there isn't much media buzz surrounding other parts of Orange County. However, the weakness of not much Internet being present in the town could be an underlying reason.

### **Wider Community (What is happening with regards to the issue?)**

From an article in "Inside Indiana Business," Alex Brown remarks on the new tourism director of the Indiana office of tourism development and her hopeful plans for the future. Brown states that "She hopes to create a strategic plan to continue the growth of tourism in the state." The new director, Misty Weisensteiner started her role in office earlier this month according to Brown. He went on to state that "the former executive director of the Orange County Economic Development Partnership says tourism and economic development go hand-in-hand and there needs to be a greater focus on that relationship." The O.C.E.D.P. will play an important and substantial role in the future plans to help fund future agricultural and infrastructural projects for towns throughout Indiana, including Orange County.

### **Publics**

#### **Who They Are**

The key publics Purdue Extension should focus their marketing and PR efforts towards are:

- Farmers in Orange County

- Families living in Orange County with disposable income
- Schools located in Orange County
- IU Students
- Frequent French Lick Resort Tourists
- Middle Class families living in neighboring towns

### **Orange County Demographics**

The average household income of Orange County residents is lower than the state median. The residents of the county income level is in contrast to the higher income level of the tourists the resorts and current tourists attractions bring in. The employment level is equal to that of the state and most residents are employed. The population tend to be those of the older generation. The top three industries for the county are “accommodation and food service, construction, and manufacturing.” The accomodation and food service brings in the most business, credited to areas surrounding the resorts and hotels. However, those who work in this industry are paid the least. Orange County has significantly lower internet speed than the rest of Indiana. This is credited to the rural environment. Most residents in the area do not have a college degree. This information was all collected from the Orange County community profile. The client has communicated other important demographic facts about the members of the community we will interact with. Youth groups such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America are important to the community. There is a small percentage of organic and liberal farmers in the area, but most tend to be traditional, conventional farmers. They take a lot of pride in their work and have a strong apprehension to outsiders.

#### **1. Key Public : Farmers in Orange County**

- There are only a handful of agritourism operations located in Orange County currently. Purdue Extension should focus on forming relationships with the farmers in this county who have not participated in agritourism and establish trust between their organization and the farmers. Purdue Extension needs to educate the farmers on the benefits and opportunities that agritourism could bring to them and their farms. The best way to do this is through phone calls and in-person meetings. More agritourism activities to participate in will encourage more tourism overall in the county.

#### **2. Middle Class families living in Orange County/Neighboring Towns**

- Although Orange County’s average household income is lower than the state average, a population of middle class families exists within each town with various amounts of disposable incomes. These families include younger families with children which make up 16.9% of the county population according Indiana’s Public Data Utility. Towns near Orange County that have a prominently middle class population include Jasper, Evansville and Salem. In general, families with children tend to spend their disposable income on activities for the entire family to participate in. Activities including hay rides, apple picking, christmas tree picking, farmers markets, educational

tours and more would attract families with children to participate in fun and family friendly excursions. Both residents and non-residents of Orange County should be targeted as key publics for future agritourism.

## **2. Schools Located in Orange County**

- The schools located in Orange County include Paoli Junior and Senior High School, Throop Elementary, Orleans Elementary, Orleans Junior/High School and Springs Valley Elementary. A Future Farmers of America program is already in place at the Paoli Junior and Senior High School, highlighting that there is already an interest at an educational and student level for farming in general. As previously mentioned, Fair Oaks Farm runs a successful agritourism business through educational tours and activities for students. Marketing agritourism activities to Orange County schools can spark an interest by schools to participate in educational tour field trips as well as creating programs for students to build better relationships with the farms.

## **3. IU Students**

- IU has a total of 42,937 students enrolled in 2018 coming from all over the US as well as the world, where 139 countries are represented by its international students according to indiana.edu. Most IU students aren't aware that Orange County exists, but participate in seasonal activities like apple picking and pumpkin patches during their weekends. Social media heavily influences what IU students, especially women, do on their weekends and in their free time. IU students could be a huge market for Orange County agritourism and the best way to spread awareness of various activities is through social media.

## **4. Frequent French Lick Resort Tourists**

- The French Lick and West Baden Springs resorts bring a major amount of tourism to Orange County every year. A major part of the demographic of the tourists that these resorts attract overlaps with the demographic Orange County agritourism should attract. The tourists going to French Lick and West Baden Springs Resorts not only have disposable income to spend, they are already aware of the area of Orange County and can be reached more directly through marketing and PR campaigns. Creating awareness of various agritourism activities will encourage tourists of the resorts to come back for another weekend and spend money on a different activities that agritourism has to offer.

## **Benchmark Communities**

### **Fair Oaks Farm - Fair Oaks, IN**

Fair Oaks Farm is the number one agritourism destination in the Midwest, according to fofarm.com. Fair Oaks has multiple exhibits on their campus, which allows patrons to have several experiences. Recently, Fair Oaks opened a hotel in collaboration with Marriott called the Fairfield Inn & Suites by

Marriott. This new establishment will allow Fair Oaks to reach a wider audience and attract more tourist, because they will have easy access to hospitality.

To interact with the public, Fair Oaks has a well established Facebook page, Instagram account and website. Their website specifically is easy to navigate and informational for those who are trying to obtain further information about Fair Oaks and visiting the site. From observing Fair Oaks marketing and social media strategies, their tactics can be implemented into how Orange County markets their agri-tourism. Their social media highlights the different programs and activities they offer, as well as the amenities featured on the campus such as a hotel and restaurants. However, it is important to remember that because Fair Oaks is also located in Indiana, it is a competitor with Orange County.

### **Hidden Villa - Los Altos Hills, CA**

Established in 1924, Hidden Villa is an organic farm that focuses on educating the youth on being environmentally safe and emphasizes being a technology-free zone. According to [hiddenvilla.org](http://hiddenvilla.org), the non-profit organization has over 30,000 people visit the location every year. Many of the programs that Hidden Villa runs are centered around teaching families and young children how to be environmentally conscious.

Being as they are a non-profit, their website heavily presses for donations. Their website and social media presence are not very strong and don't seem to be attracting new visitors. However, the large amount of programs they offer and targeting children as their demographic is key to their success. Targeting the youth and banning technology allows for a space where children can learn and parents are confident their children are being educated. Integrating programs similar to what Hidden Villa provides would be easy and create engagement with the community.

### **Blackberry Farm - Walland, TN**

Blackberry Farm gives tourists the perfect combination of involvement with the environment and high-end hotel experience. They are focused around a farming lifestyle and educating visitors on the rich history the farm has. Additionally, they offer visitors amenities such as a spa and winery. Rather than build a hotel, Blackberry guests stay in houses to provide a more intimate stay.

The aesthetic and presence that Blackberry offers on their website and social media is similar which presents a strong brand. This cohesion allows for an interested tourist to understand Blackberry and what they can expect from their visit. The type of experience that Blackberry is offering seems more high-end, and is targeted to a different economic class. This is important to remember as tourists come from all economic statuses, so there needs to be options that be used to address all potential tourists interested in visited.

## SWOT

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The partnership with Purdue Extension</li> <li>- A variety of different farms and agritourism efforts already in existence (Lost River, Brambleberry Farms, Living Roots Farm, etc.)</li> <li>- Well-established tourism within French Lick and West Baden</li> <li>- Residents of the county are passionate about what they do (farmers, business owners, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The towns within the counties are in competition with each other</li> <li>- Lack of trust from the farmers</li> <li>- Communication barriers</li> <li>- Lack of farmer’s knowledge in technology, as well as other Orange County residents</li> <li>- Lack of knowledge of what exist in the county</li> <li>- Farmers will be unavailable for the majority of the harvest season</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room for educational programs incorporated into agritourism for the youth within Orange County</li> <li>- Expanding communities, and encouraging them to work together</li> <li>- A variety of agritourism opportunities already in place</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fair Oaks farm, one of the largest agritourism businesses in the nation, is only 30 mins away</li> <li>- Competing with the resorts in town</li> <li>- Competition between the towns in Orange County could lead to lack of teamwork to build upon agritourism</li> </ul>

### Core Problem / Opportunity Statement

Purdue Extension has recognized that there is an opportunity to break into the agritourism industry in Orange County. According to current trends, income for local farmers and business owners has been unreliable due to external factors such as weather and tourism. Because of this, we believe that there is an opportunity to create agritourism opportunities within Orange County, by creating new agritourism programs to implement throughout the county. This in turn will both benefit the farmers financially, and create new activities for tourists to indulge in. We believe that this situation offers Purdue Extension a great opportunity to help better the community of Orange County

### Next Steps

The information we still need to uncover stems from the research that has already been conducted, specifically regarding the Orange County demographics and the core issues. We need to conduct qualitative research with the farmers to figure out the *why*. First, regarding the demographics, because there are more traditional farmers in Orange County than organic ones, it is essential that we work to

find their niche; what makes their traditional farms unique. And because of the pride they have in their operations, it is important that we learn about the history of each farm, especially ones that go back generations. It will be easier to form a vision and a purpose for these farmers to participate in the agritourism business if this is accomplished.

This is not information we can get from secondary research. Therefore, conducting small interviews with the farmers will allow us to fulfill this next step. This also ties into the way in which we can get them to open up and gain more trust if we show interest in what they love, what they are passionate about. These interviews will be the best way to gather primary research because we will better understand the attitudes and perceptions around the agritourism trend as well as their in-depth views of business and the surrounding competitors. Relationship building is the essence of public relations and trust lies at the forefront of any campaign. Without a trustful relationship, there cannot be a successful campaign. It will be important to remember that although there is opportunity in these areas, we must first take the time to be learners; to understand what lies at the core of these farmers.

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

### Research Goals & Questions

1. **Motivation:** Understand what would make farmer and local tourism consider agritourism.
  - a. What motivates farmers and tourism professionals to consider agritourism?
  - b. What benefits do farmers and tourism professionals seek from agritourism?
2. **Barrier:** Discover what local tourism professionals and farmers understand about agritourism.
  - a. What does successful agritourism look like in the community?
  - b. What would be reservations to participating in Agritourism?
3. **Channels and Settings:** Discover channels and settings farmers and local tourism professionals use most commonly.
  - a. What are the most accessible channels for farmers and business professionals?
  - b. How can the current channels of communication be improved?

### Method Justification

For our qualitative research, our team chose to conduct interviews in order to gather information from farmers and tourism professionals. Our team decided to go this route for a variety of reasons, but at its core, the ability for a more honest interview, high level of interview control and ability to freely probe the interviewees were our main drivers for choosing to interview this public. With this, our team was able to conduct 7 phone interviews collectively with 4 farmers and 3 tourism professionals. Through our method, we believe the data we've collected will allow our team to further influence the progress of agritourism through Purdue Extension.

### Data Collection Logistics

To collect our data, our team conducted all interviews over the telephone. The 4 farmers and 3 tourism professionals contacted were all located in Indiana's Orange County and their contact information was provided to the team by Purdue Extension. Each interview was audio recorded through various applications including Google Voice and TapeACall. The interviews were then transcribed by the team member that had moderated the interaction. The interviews took place between the dates of February 21, 2019 to March 1, 2019. The following list includes the date, mode, and duration of the interviews as they appear on the report.

**Interview 1:** Thursday, February 21st, 12:00 PM, Phone Interview--32 minutes, 50 seconds

**Interview 2:** Tuesday, February 26th, 11:15 AM, Phone Interview--21 minutes, 8 seconds

**Interview 3:** Tuesday, February 26th, 2:25 P.M Phone Interview--15 minutes 14 seconds

**Interview 4:** Thursday, February 28th, 3:00 P.M., Phone interview--15 minutes, 11 seconds

**Interview 5:** Friday, March 1st 8:30 AM, Phone Interview--21 minutes

**Interview 6:** Friday, February 22nd, 11:00 A.M., Phone Interview--39 mins 5 seconds



## **Analysis Process**

### **Initial Analysis Process and Coding Development:**

We each reviewed our transcripts individually and then came together as a group to discuss what our codes could potentially be. We used our research questions to help develop our codes.

### **Coding Process:**

We used eight colors to code our interviews to analyze the interviews we had produced. We then used the commenting feature on Google Docs to apply our sub-codes to each specific code.

### **Code Analysis:**

First, we read through each transcript and wrote down every sub-code we had created. Then, we tallied up the frequency with which each sub-code appeared. Next, we chose the sub-codes that appeared the most and used them to answer each research question. Additionally, we looked at quotes that represented these sub-codes and wrote them down. Finally, we gathered all of the most important quotes that best represented our key findings.

## **Key Findings**

### **RQ (1): What motivates farmers and tourism professionals to consider agritourism?**

Speaking to our various sources, we discovered that the main motivations both farmers and tourism professionals possess are aspirations of furthering education, generating revenue and bringing the community together through agritourism efforts. Many of our sources spoke about the importance of educating younger generations regarding agriculture as a driving factor in building a successful venture in agritourism.

*“I think that people like to see where their food comes from, so not only would it help make healthier choices in our community, ... farms are opportunities for people from larger metropolitan areas to visit, and it would give them the chance to see maybe where their food comes from as well.” (Visit French Lick West Baden)*

Along with education, creating additional revenue is a common driving force for most professionals we interviewed.

*“I think it would be more commerce.. I think it’s kinda systematic, you know, it’s basically when you have more people coming into the county and you have more money to expand, I think our infrastructure gets better that way.” (USDA)*

Additionally, interviewees expressed motivation in fostering a community identity and pride from both within the community and outside of it.

*“Our biggest thing is just the southern Indiana hospitality, family friendly, bringing all of those things together in one and having that available to all our guests...to understand that’s something*

*that's highly important to our community and just being welcoming and inviting to everyone.”*  
(Paoli Peaks)

By finding these three key motivations, we were able to garner a better understanding of the foundation elements both farmers and tourism professionals look to in developing a career in agritourism.

**RQ (2) : What benefits do farmers and tourism professionals seek from agritourism?**

The two main benefits both farmers and tourism professionals seek from agritourism are income and community support. Through our interviews, we were able to determine that the Orange County community works cohesively to support one another to grow their agritourism ventures and obtain tourist. This not only brings together the community, but it also presents a united front.

*“I think that there's pride in our communities. I think there's definitely pride in the schools and the sports. And I think they're proud of the turnaround that this community has made like employment wise and things like with the resort coming back to life. I think there's like genuine hospitality from people here too, and like trying to help one another.”* (Visit French Lick West Baden)

Additionally, the community benefits from the income they receive from the multiple agritourism ventures that are already in place.

*“There are a couple big benefits like the fact that people realize where their food comes from and it can also offer a new stream of incomes to farmers.”* (Farmer H)

From this information, we were able to accumulate a deeper understanding of what outcomes are important to individuals in the Orange County community and that we need to remember as we begin to make suggestions on future endeavours.

**RQ (3) : What does successful agritourism look like in the community?**

While interviewing farmers and tourism professionals, we discovered that interviewees recognized several successful examples of agritourism ventures and thriving local businesses in the community. Multiple sources referred to business such as seasonal produce businesses, petting zoos, and outdoor recreation activities.

*Um, probably Wilstem ranch, which is a local, kind of like a farm experience with animals, petting zoos do different things in nature as well as we have local caves. Um, the Cape country canoes is a good option as well as Patoka lake has done a very good job of setting up a recreational business around nature item itself.* (Paoli Peaks)

However, in their responses, the interviewees also refer to several example of agritourism success outside of the community such as the wineries in Napa Valley.

*Yeah. With all the wineries [in Napa Valley]. It's all based on I mean its tours, and wineries and sampling. (Farmer H)*

From this information, we were able to accumulate a deeper understanding of how the members of the community view successful agritourism and what they consider to be successful in the agritourism market.

#### **RQ (4) : What would be reservations to participating in Agritourism?**

The main reservations both farmers and tourism professionals spoke to regarding agritourism efforts were the complications of logistical planning and negative attitudes from either farmers or the general public. Many sources we interviewed discussed the possible difficulties of planning and executing a successful agritourism venture including liabilities, lack of communication, expenses and labor. They also discussed how some farmers as well as publics have misconceptions and negative opinions about agritourism and what it does for farmers and the community as a whole.

Labor:

*“Well, I mean, you know, it's a lot about labor. Farmers are super busy. I would say this is probably one of the main issues why agritourism doesn't develop more. Especially with small farms. Farmers are constantly strapped for time and they don't make a lot of money. And so to find extra time to or dollars to invest into, um, to some structure or infrastructure or marketing is a challenge.” (Farmer H)*

Misconceptions:

*“There's a lot of misconceptions that, that farmers are poisoning the environment by putting chemicals on their crops and, all the ridiculous misconceptions about genetically modified stuff and all that. But I think it would help dispel a lot of those myths.” (Farmer M)*

Logistics and Planning:

*“I would say it would be logistics more than anything. Um, yeah, I think the way the hotel has to set up down in French lick in West Baden, I think they have coaches that come in and, and are constantly bringing in new folks in a, they have tours that are set up with the peaks with our Paoli peaks here or snow skiing, and our golf courses, you know, in the summer, to where they make it an all inclusive weekend getaway. And I think that is something that has to be set up, some kind of a logistical situation to where there's a plan, there's a...an excursion so to speak.” (USDA)*

#### **RQ (5): What are the most accessible channels for farmers and business professionals?**

In our interviews we learned that there are numerous channels of communication in the community. Farmers and business professionals are available to be contacted in a myriad of ways. The community has a foundation in newsprint, but has also expanded their channels to include social media.

*“Well, we have a local paper. In this community I'd say we have the local newspaper and the other [channel] would be technology. Facebook messages and stuff like that. I'd say communication in the community is 60 percent technology and 40 percent newsprint.” (Farmer H)*

*“We do advertise, like when we have cattle for sale, we do, we sell some breeding stock and stuff and we, we definitely utilize social media in advertising what we have.” (Farmer M)*

Additionally, due to an age gap within the community, both traditional and modern forms of communication are utilized simultaneously. For example, FM radio and television are still major forms of communication for some, while the internet and social media are top of the list for others. This shows us that catering to people with a wide array of communication experience in the county is important to keep in mind when it comes to both communicating with them and the success of their businesses.

*“In the community itself I’d say it’s kind of divided. Um, we’re kind of age gap pretty largely when it comes to certain things. A lot of individuals still utilize our local radio station. Um, we do have a community calendar that a lot of information’s put on. And an older generation does still use that. And for the younger, it’s more of the social media, Facebook platform.” (PP)*

#### **RQ (6): How can the current channels of communication be improved?**

After interviewing the farmers and tourism professionals we found that there is potential to further build on communication channels within the Orange County area. However, since the internet and its broadband access are limited, this makes the use of technology, specifically social media, more difficult for the farmers. The tourism professionals we spoke with had more of a solid grasp on their channels, and therefore have less of an issue when it comes to technology use. The farmers, however, have more restricted use and access to a wider array of communication channels, subsequently making it more of a task for them to stay involved with functioning channels.

*“Like I said, I know we need to have a website to promote what we do. That would help us a lot. I just haven’t had time to get around to doing it.” (Farmer M)*

Many farmers that we spoke to were hoping to make improvements in their technology use for the future.

*“The current methods are okay, they can always improve. I don’t use Twitter, but it might be useful to get on Twitter. Some of the other methods might be better too.” (Farmer H)*

We may see a shift in farmers use of technology in the coming years if they see examples of other farmers or tourism professionals continuing to use communication channels effectively.

*“I think they’re [current channels] beneficial to an extent. I do think that if there was a way to get everyone on the same platform, whether it be through the visitor’s center or just a consistent method that we could all provide information to each other, that would be a lot cleaner way for us to provide and promote each other as an area.” (Paoli Peaks)*

#### **Other Important Findings**

Throughout our research, we also came across some important information in interviewing both the farmers and agritourism professionals. One theme of concern that was expressed by farmers and agritourism professionals alike was how people value food in the community, and the importance of

food awareness. This is an important key finding because this issue could directly affect the businesses of agritourism professionals in Orange County, and therefore should be recognized.

*“Even my kids they’re in first and second grade and I talk to them now about why I don't buy that because it's full of chemicals and chemicals aren't good for your body....And I try to stress that to my kids so that even if they're not with me they're trying to make healthier decisions and they do listen to what we say.” (Visit French Lick West Baden)*

*“Yeah, there's a lot of people who have plenty of disposable income, they just choose not to spend it on food or they're used to buying cheap food. So that's, I mean I think that's core to I guess anything involving agriculture.” (Farmer H)*

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

### Research Goals & Questions

1. **Discover tourist awareness of agritourism and Orange County.**
  - a. What general knowledge of agritourism do tourists have?
  - b. What exposure do tourists have to the towns in Orange County?
2. **Understand what motivates tourists to participate in agritourism.**
  - a. What attracts you to specific agritourism ventures?
  - b. What discourages tourists from participating in agritourism?
3. **Determine channels and settings feel most comfortable with regarding agritourism.**
  - a. What channels and settings do tourists feel comfortable using?
  - b. What channels and settings would allow for more accessibility for tourist?

### Survey Methodology

A survey is defined as a system for collecting comparable information across many people. The various modes of surveying include internet, phone, mail and face-to-face surveys. The types of questions typically found on surveys are open-ended, multiple choice, a checklist, rank order, likert scale (“likely, neutral, unlikely”) and semantic differential (“happy, sad”). There are several strengths to conducting surveys. These include being useful in describing large populations, can be standardized, generalizable and allow for a range of analysis techniques to be used. Conversely, there are also weaknesses that come with conducting surveys. These include a lack of context, inflexible, artificial, a lack of ability to follow-up and response set choices that force an answer that might not actually apply to the respondent.

### Questionnaire Design

#### A) Item Design: General Knowledge Question Block

- **Question 5** uses an interval level of measurement. It is a likert scale question.
- **Question 6** uses a nominal level of measurement. It is a dichotomous question.
- **Question 7** uses a nominal level of measurement. It is a multiple choice question and respondents just pick one.
- **Question 8** uses a nominal level of measurement. It is a skip and checklist question where the respondent only views the question if they select “I am familiar with agritourism” in question 5.

#### B) Survey Improvements

- **Question 16:** What emotion do you best associate with agritourism? This item provides responses that don’t reflect a broad spectrum of human emotion. ‘Satisfaction’ is a vague, non-descriptive response that doesn’t provide us with solid information. ‘Nostalgia,’ ‘Negative,’ ‘I have no emotions,’ and ‘Excitement’ are all strong emotional responses, but ‘Satisfaction’ needs to change. It would be a better

idea to change ‘Satisfaction’ to ‘Happiness’ to portray a stronger positive emotional response.

- **Questions 31 and 32:** The questions ‘How likely are you to use technology (internet, social media) to find tourism activities?’ and ‘How likely are you to use traditional media (radio, TV, newspaper advertisements) to find agritourism activities?’ can be combined to become more specific. The question could simply be ‘Which option are you most likely to use to find agritourism activities?’ and have ‘internet,’ ‘social media,’ ‘radio,’ ‘TV,’ and ‘newspaper advertisements’ as the responses. These responses are more specific and allow us to better understand which specific forms of media to target in the future.

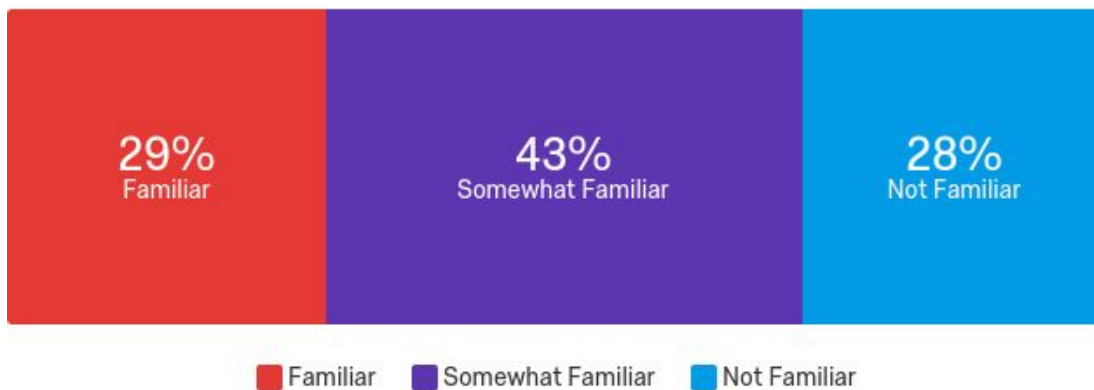
## Key Findings

### Research Question 1

*What general knowledge of agritourism do tourists have?*

- Of the 76 who responded to this question, 29% of respondents said they were “familiar” with agritourism, 43% said they were “somewhat familiar” with agritourism and 28% said they were “not familiar” with agritourism (measured on a 3-point scale from “familiar” to “not familiar,”  $M=1.99$ ,  $SD= 0.75$ .) This tells us that of the respondents who answered this question, 72% of respondents had some idea of what agritourism is. This is important information to have in deciding who to market agritourism opportunities to.

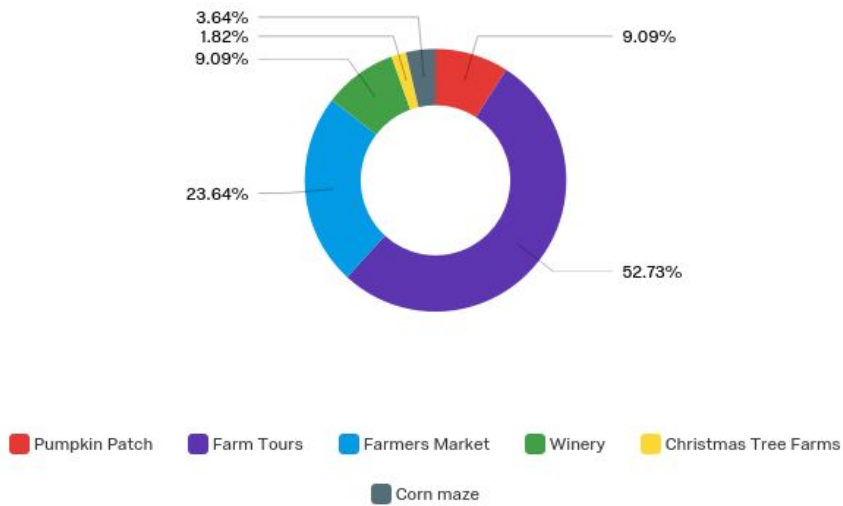
Respondent's Familiarity with Agritourism



*Note: Out of 76 respondents.*

- Of the 55 respondents who were familiar with agritourism, 52.73% recognized “farm tours” as an agritourism activity, followed by 23.64% choosing “farmers market” as an activity associated with agritourism. “Wineries” and “pumpkin patches” followed behind with 9.09% of people associating both with agritourism. This tells us that most people associate “farm tours” and “farmers market” with agritourism, showing us that tourists seem to have a narrow understanding of all of the activities agritourism has to offer. (Graph on next page)

Activites Respondents Best Associate with Agritourism



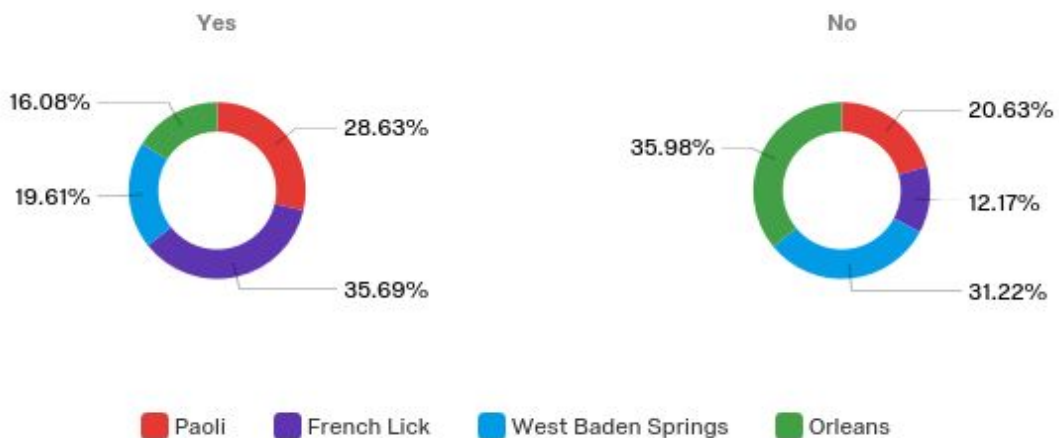
Note: Out of 55 respondents.

Research Question 2

What exposure do tourists have to the towns in Orange County?

- Our survey response shows that of the towns in Orange County, 79.82% have heard of French Lick, 65.18 % have heard of Paoli, In contrast 54.13 have not heard of West Baden Springs and 62.39 % have not heard of Orleans. This is important information to show which of the town's tourist are familiar with and could provide insightful information when choosing where to position agritourism attractions.

Respondent's Knowledge of Towns Within Orange County



Note: Out of 114 respondents for French Lick  
 Out of 112 respondents for Paoli  
 Out of 109 respondents for West Baden Springs  
 Out of 109 respondents for Orleans

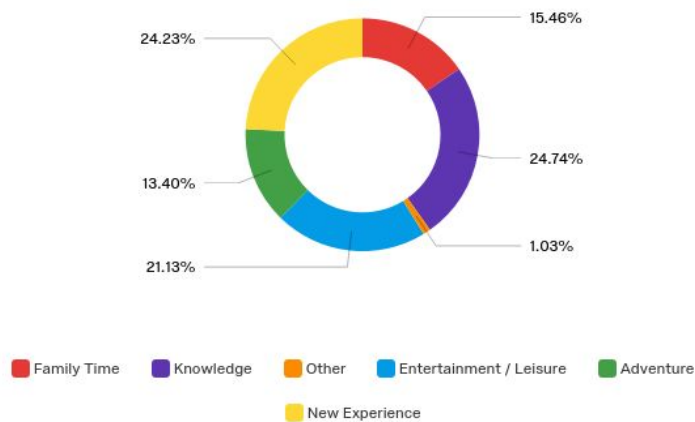


### Research Question 3

*What attracts you to specific agritourism ventures?*

- Of the 194 responses recorded here, 24.74% hope to gain knowledge out of agritourism ventures, 24.23% hope to have a new experience from agritourism, and 21.13% hope to receive “Entertainment/ Leisure.” This tells us that respondents fairly equally look to agritourism to gain knowledge, acquire new experiences or to find entertainment or leisure. This helps us understand that gaining knowledge and new experiences, as well as experiencing entertainment are most attractive to tourists regarding agritourism and could help inform future campaign messages.

What Respondents Hope to Get Out of Agritourism



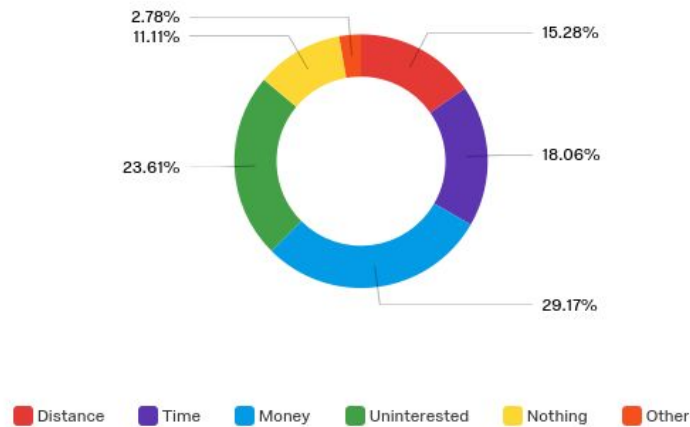
*Note: Out of 194 respondents.*

#### Research Question 4

*What discourages tourists from participating in agritourism?*

- Out of the 72 that responded here, 21% cited money as the biggest prevention of their participation. However, respondents being “uninterested” in agritourism came in close behind with 23.61% choosing this answer. Uninterest being such a massive prevention behind money makes us think that we should focus on generating interest behind agritourism in Orange County.

Reasons Preventing Respondents from Participating in Agritourism



*Note: Out of 72 respondents.*

- Of the 72 (p= .03) respondents, 50% of those who responded “very likely” to participating in agritourism were of the “35-44” age range, followed by 25% of the “18-24” age range. (measured on a 4-point scale from “very likely” to “not likely at all,” M=3.19, SD= 1.79.) For those who responded “likely” to participate, 45% of the responses came from the “18-24” age range. For “somewhat likely” and “not likely at all” to participate in agritourism, the “18-24” age range gave the most overwhelming response, with 76% claiming “somewhat likely” while 77.78% responded “not likely at all. This tells us that the “35-44” age range is most likely to participate in agritourism, while “18-24” are both on the fence about participating and most likely not to participate at all. This tells us we should focus on targeting the “35-44” age group to share information and create excitement surrounding agritourism opportunities. As for the “18-24” age group, we should offer this demographic more information on agritourism which could offer an opportunity change their opinions surrounding agritourism and create buzz for those who did respond “likely” to participate.

### Likelihood of Respondents to Participate in Agritourism by Age



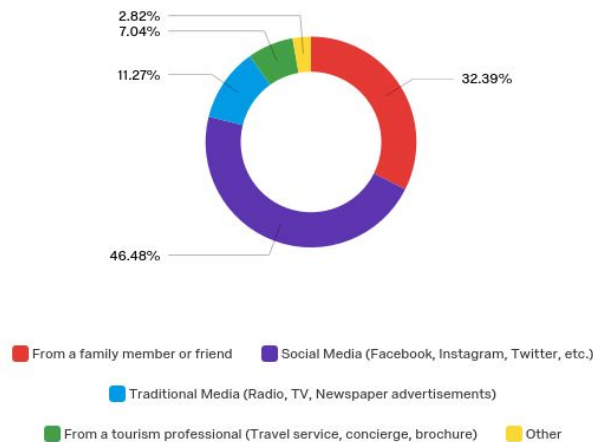
*Note: Out of 72 respondents.*

### Research Question 5

*What channels and settings do tourists feel comfortable using?*

- In total, 71 respondents were able to respond here. Of those respondents, 46.84% preferred to use social media to find agritourism activities, and 32.39% said they use family or friends to learn about agritourism in Orange County. This shows us that among our respondents, who are typically college age, they are most likely to look to social media to research Orange County Agritourism activities. Moving forward, this helps us understand that our respondents prefer to receive information using social media.

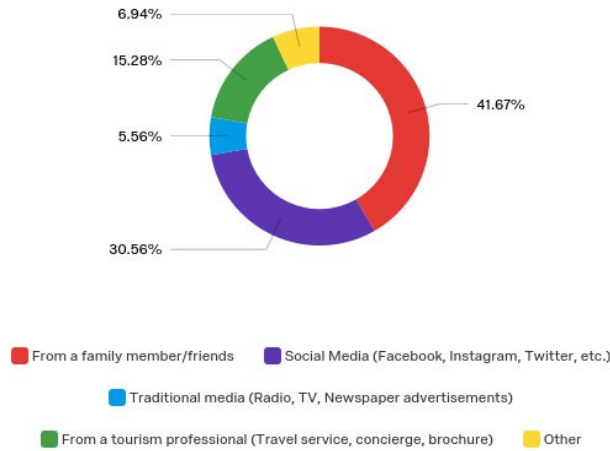
How Respondents Prefer to Learn About Agritourism Ventures



*Note: Out of 71 respondents.*

- In total, 72 respondents were able to respond here. 41.67% found that they preferred to use family or friends to find activities, while 30.56% said they use social media to find activities for vacation/trips. This information is important as it shows that individuals trust the the word of their peers for quality recommendations on activities to participate in during vacations/trips and can be used when deciding modes for campaign messages later on. To reconcile this response and the one featured above, it may be beneficial to incorporate testimonials from individuals who have participated in various agritourism ventures on social media platforms. This would allow for social media users to experience a more personal connection to the agritourism activity. (Graph on next page)

How Respondents Find Activities to Participate in During Vacations/Trips



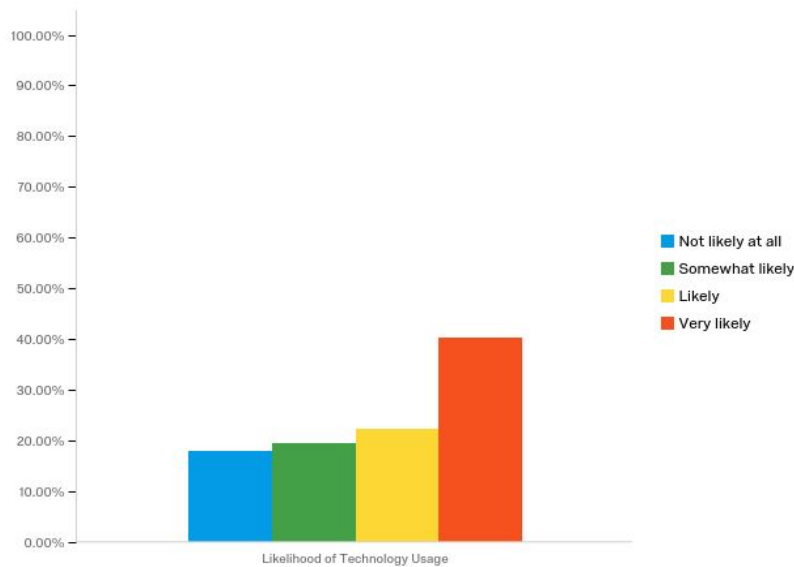
*Note: Out of 72 respondents.*

**Research Question 6**

*What channels and settings would allow for more accessibility for tourists?*

- Out of 72 total respondents, 40.28% said that they were very likely to use technology. Further, 22.22% said that they were likely to use it, 19.44% said they were somewhat likely to use technology to discover agritourism opportunities, and 18.06% said that they were not at all likely, (measured on a 4-point scale from “Very Likely to Not at all likely,”  $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ). This provides us with the information that a large number of respondents in Orange County or other, showed positive feelings toward the use of technology in finding and discovering more information on Agritourism activities.

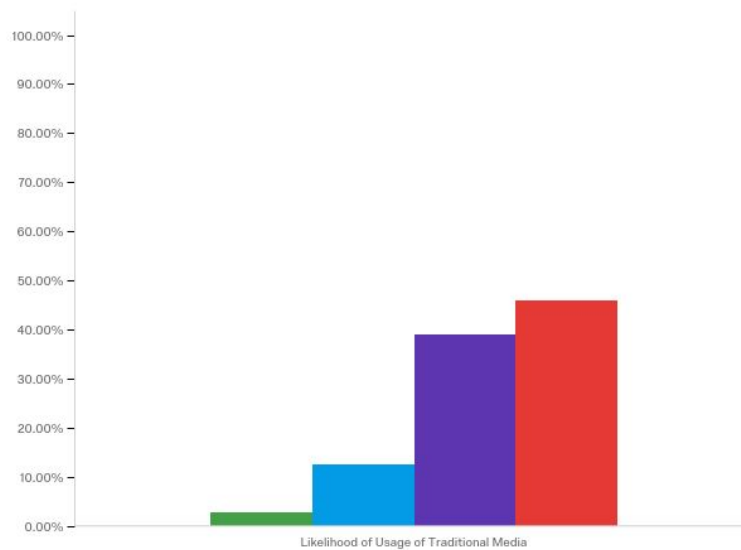
Likelihood of Respondence Using Technology to Discover Agritourism Activities



*Note: Out of 72 respondents.*

- Out of 72 respondents, 45.83% stated they were not at all likely to use traditional media sources when learning of agritourism activities. 38.89% stated that they were somewhat likely to use traditional media, 12.50% of respondents were likely, and 2.78% stated that they were very likely to use traditional media sources, (measured on a 4-point scale from “Very Likely to Not at all likely,”  $M= 1.72$ ,  $SD= 0.79$ ). From this gathered data, we find that respondents are either somewhat or not at all likely to use traditional media outlets such as public radio, tv advertisements, newspapers etc. Though from earlier data we saw that most respondents held positive feelings toward the usage of technology, we could predict that they may be using different sources, such as social media, to seek news and information about agritourism activities.

Likelihood of Usage of Traditional Media to Learn About Agritourism Activities



*Note: Out of 72 respondents.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Qualitative Recommendations

1. Our first recommendation would be for Purdue Extension to compile a resource list so the existing businesses have a way to connect with not only helpful resources to those interested in venturing into agritourism but also others involved in agritourism to create a sense of community among these agritourism professionals.
  - a. **Channels:** Social advertising, paper advertisements, brochures, e-blast, and flyers.
  - b. **Settings:** Around Orange County, leave in shops/stores especially big resorts, high schools, city hall (i.e. French Lick West Baden)
  - c. **Messaging:** “Here is a helpful list for all the resources you may need when dealing with agritourism. Contact us to find out how!” (Purdue Extension: phone number, address, etc).
  - d. **Justification:** Farmers and agritourism professionals said they knew what agritourism was in some shape or form, however they were not familiar with what other agritourism was going on specially in Orange County as a whole. ( Farmer M quote). We selected places around this community that the farmers have regular access to and/or would come in contact with throughout their regular choice as they are very busy and do not venture out of their regular routine much.
2. Our second recommendation would be to bring in a social media management professional to run information sessions on both basic technology operating and social media management to aid the existing businesses on marketing their commodities. This information session should cater to all level of technology literacy in order to create a comfortable learning environment inclusive of all types of practices.
  - a. **Channels:** Social Advertising, paper advertisements, brochures, e-blast, flyers
  - b. **Settings:** Around Orange County, leave in shops/stores especially big resorts, high schools, city hall(i.e. French Lick West Baden,Purdue Extension office, Paoli Town Offices)
  - c. **Messaging:** Recommend using messaging that would be understandable to farmers who do not have much background in social media or technology. From the research we found both farmers and agritourism professionals felt that they should be on twitter for example but did not necessarily know how. Promote the importance that these channels can bring to their business and do not have to be millennials or generation x to be successful on these channels.
  - d. **Justification:**Farmers and agritourism professionals both felt that they could put themselves out there more when it came to social media or having a website. (i.e. Farmer H.2 quote). We selected places that would be large enough for multiple farmers to attend for a group session, however possible in home sessions.
3. Our third recommendation is to create more visibility and understanding about Purdue Extension and the opportunities and services that it can provide to agritourism professionals.
  - a. **Channels:** Social Advertising, paper advertisements, brochures, e-blast, flyers, website
  - b. **Settings:** Purdue Extension offices, websites, popular locations within Orange County (i.e. French Lick Resort & Casino, French Lick Winery, Supply Stores, etc.)

- c. **Messaging:** Purdue Extension is here to help you and your business succeed!
  - d. **Justification:** Farmers and agritourism professionals both felt that they did not know what all Purdue extension had to offer. We selected the office itself because that is their main location for in person interaction or over the phone, but also updating and making their website more accessible to farmers and local business/professionals.
4. Our fourth recommendation is for Purdue Extension to create a mentorship program that would partner agritourism professionals with like-minded local businesses to further develop agritourism operations and support their successes.
- a. **Channels:** Social Advertising, paper advertisements, brochures, e-blast, flyers
  - b. **Settings:** Purdue Extension office
  - c. **Messaging:** “Coming together to make a stronger community.”
  - d. **Justification:** Farmers and Agritourism professionals both felt that either the farmers were waiting on the business, or vice versa. We suggested that Purdue Extension be the liaison of these two groups to make sure things are actually getting done, and no more false promises are made. (i.e. Farmer H quote)

## Quantitative Recommendations

1. Our first recommendation is for Purdue Extension to put marketing materials in surrounding counties and town explaining what agritourism is and what agritourism opportunities Orange County specifically has to offer.
  - a. **Channels:** Posters, paper advertisements, banners, and flyers.
  - b. **Settings:** In counties and towns near Orange County, leave in shops/stores, downtown areas, the farmers market, Memorial Union.
  - c. **Messaging:**
    - i. “Agritourism: How You Can Help Local Businesses While Having Fun”
    - ii. A simplified definition of agritourism.
    - iii. Examples of local agritourism from Orange County
    - iv. Pictures of locals engaging in agritourism activities
  - d. **Justification:** Of our respondents, only 29% said that they were “familiar” with agritourism. This creates an opportunity for Purdue Extension to create awareness about not only agritourism, but agritourism in Orange County. This recommendations will build an understanding of what agritourism is while offering marketing activities specific to Orange County to promote their agritourism efforts.
2. Our second recommendation would be for Purdue Extension to advertise agritourism attractions through social media.
  - a. **Channels:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest (etc).
  - b. **Settings:** Purdue Extension social media pages, promoting on travel pages, setting up links to the agritourism businesses websites.
  - c. **Messaging:** “Interested in a leisurely weekend in beautiful Indiana? Check out our page for more info!” (Purdue Extension social media page)
  - d. **Justification:** In our fifth research question key findings, we found that respondents preferred to find agritourism activities through social media. In order to reach our desired audience, using modes of communication they are well-versed with will benefit both parties in the end.



3. Our 3rd recommendation would be for Purdue Extension to build relationships with the age demographic of 18-24 near Orange County to create more interest and awareness of agritourism.
  - a. **Channels:** Social Media, Email
  - b. **Settings:** Create various social media ads/campaigns that target young people in and around Orange County.
  - c. **Messaging:** “Want to get that perfect fall Instagram post? Come visit \_\_\_\_\_ apple picking farm!”
  - d. **Justification:** Question 3 led us to the conclusion that because only 25% of this age demographic is “very likely” to participate in agritourism, we should focus on offering them more information on agritourism. This could offer an opportunity to change their opinions surrounding agritourism and create buzz for the 45% of those who did respond “likely” to participate.
4. Our final recommendation is for Purdue Extension to create more awareness of agritourism activities via word of mouth by encouraging agritourism businesses to create referral programs.
  - a. **Channels:** Email, word of mouth, flyers, phone calls
  - b. **Settings:** When a customer engages in an agritourism activity, they are able to refer a friend by giving their email or phone number to get a discount or other incentive.
  - c. **Messaging:** “When you refer friend or family member, you both get 20% off your next visit!”
  - d. **Justification:** In question 5, 41.67% of the respondents found that they preferred to use family or friends to find activities. Purdue Extension should use this information and recommend using a referral program to increase awareness and tourism overall, as most respondents trust the opinions of people they know.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

Throughout the research process, we learned the importance of persistence and collaboration in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. For the qualitative process, we found that our assumptions heading into research did not directly line up with what we found. Because of this, we had to be persistent in reaching our interview goals. For the quantitative process, the most important thing we learned is dealing with the realities of collecting data and how it can cause setbacks within the research process. Again, we had to be persistent in ensuring our data was clear and concise to meet our research goals.

We learned the importance of collaboration throughout both processes. For the qualitative process, we learned how to collaborate by communicating with each other about which interviews were being conducted. For the quantitative process, we learned collaboration by effectively working in unison to create a report most representative of our findings, despite facing a few challenges along the way with Qualtrics. Ultimately, the ability to work together to tackle large tasks allowed us to best achieve our goals throughout both the research processes which then prompted us to be more aware because although it may be tedious, it will pay off in the long run.